



Chief Editor: *Elsie Davis*

March - April 2014



## RD's Corner

The old expression that “winter comes in like a lion” certainly held true in the Southeast this year, but

there are signs that it may be “going out like a lamb.” Here in the Southeast, temperatures are warming, daffodils are popping up, and within the next few months we can expect to see warblers, thrushes and sparrows on their spring migration.

One of the things we learn in the heart of winter is what we can and can't control. We can't control the weather, but we can control our attitude toward it. The same could be said about our conservation work: We can control how much effort we put into increasing people's understanding of why we do what we do, but we can't control the fundamental response people may have toward that and why we do it.

From where I sit, I believe we need to be proactive. That means rather than waiting for challenging circumstances, we should anticipate and plan for them. Being proactive in our conservation work means that we plan for and address the desired future to meet the conservation challenges we face in the communities where we work—the citizens and their cultural norms, their local and state governments, the economy, recreation, health and safety, growing trends—in short, all the things that impact or are impacted by people. People – and the relationships and perspectives they bring – are critical to our success. Then we build

*continued on page 2*

## The ABCs of the MDL

*By Elsie Davis, External Affairs*

In May 2011, the Service and the WildEarth Guardians entered into a national agreement mapping out a listing workplan for six years, 2013 through 2018. The agreement, filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, allows the Service to focus its listing actions on the more than 250 Candidate species listed in the 2010 Candidate Notice of Review to determine whether they warrant listing as threatened or endangered. In July 2011, the Service reached a separate, but complimentary agreement with another group, the Center for Biological Diversity, which reinforces the multi-year work plan. Both agreements are known as the Multi-District Litigation or MDL.

The multi-year work plan is intended to reduce the amount of litigation that has dominated and determined the Service's listing workload over the last several years. It also provides some certainty to the Service's partners and the public about when and how the needs of species on the candidate list will be addressed.

The Center for Biological Diversity's annexation to the initial agreement includes additional scheduling commitments for some of the petition findings requested in the initial work plan. For the Southeast Region, petition findings were requested in FY 2011 for the Coqui llanero (Puerto Rican tree frog), the Ozark chinquapin, and a “mega-petition” that included 404 southeast aquatic species.

In September of that year, the Service determined listing may be warranted for 374 of the aquatic species in the mega-petition, and not warranted for the remaining 30 species. In 2012, the

petitioner withdrew its request to list two of the aquatic species, the Lower Florida Keys striped mud turtle and seepage salamander, due to more information about their status.

Other petition findings requested in the initial agreement were for the Ozark chinquapin and the Coqui llanero. The Service decided listing was not warranted for the Ozark chinquapin, a chestnut tree, because it is widespread in the highlands of Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. In October 2011, the Service proposed endangered status with critical habitat for Coqui llanero, and this status was finalized on October 3, 2012. ❖



*Florida leafwing, Holly Salvato*



*Bartram's Scrub-hairstreak, Holly Salvato*

### What's coming in FY 2014

This year, in FY 2014, the Southeast Region has about one-third, or 25 actions for 25 species, of all the listing actions scheduled nationally under the MDL. Some of the highlights are a proposed listing determination as endangered and a proposed critical habitat designation for the black pine snake in Mississippi and Alabama, and a final determination on listing as endangered

with critical habitat designation for two Florida butterflies, Florida leafwing and Bartram's scrub-hairstreak. Others include a final listing and critical habitat determinations for the Georgia rockcress, an herb found near rock outcrops and river bluffs, and a proposed listing and critical habitat determination for the Sequatchie caddisfly, a winged, aquatic insect found in Tennessee.

*continued on page 2*

## *RD's Corner continued...*

communications and engagement that take into account those realities and we listen to the communities' concerns. We invite citizens and stakeholders into our processes often and early, whenever and wherever we can. We acknowledge those things that are important to them—healthy environments for families and thriving economies for businesses, for example—and we contextualize them within the realm of ecosystem services that our conservation work helps to protect. We build relationships and, in so doing, we increase trust and the greater possibility that we can move forward to fulfill our mandates and achieve our desired outcomes.

One example among several I can point to as evidence of our success with this approach on a broad scale is the Southeast At-Risk Species initiative. We are working closely with the states to fully use existing conservation tools like Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances and build new partnerships with private landowners and other conservationists to conserve At Risk species. We are getting conservation delivered on the ground in the right places at the right time to save these at-risk species from further imperilment and the need to federally list them, which in turn will minimize the regulatory burden on communities and provide certainty.

This work and accomplishments in other areas such as the establishment of the Everglades Headwaters NWR and Conservation Area and red-cockaded woodpecker recovery with our military partners are possible because we think about what success looks like and we are flexible about how we get there. We know 'my way or your way' doesn't work. So we move away from two-alternative thinking, with its inherent win/lose outcome. In its place, we go for the third alternative, our way, which involves working together to craft a positive outcome for both people and wildlife. It's a way that requires us to commit more thinking and understanding of the role social science plays in our overall fish and wildlife conservation efforts which are based on the sound biological work we do. We are entering an era where relationships

more often than not will be among the most important factors in our success putting together the conservation landscape of the future so it meets the needs of the communities we live in and the fish and wildlife that need it to survive and thrive.

This approach is implicit in our move toward a strategic, landscape-scale approach to conservation especially as resources become tighter. It requires a big, upfront investment in people that will enable a much bigger payoff for fish and wildlife. It is an approach that is more easily talked about than carried out as we all have lots of different ideas and points of view, plus the fact that we are all busy. But in my book, taking this on as conservation leaders is not optional—it's mission critical.

Over the course of my career, it has been my observation that the people who excel in conservation work factor in other people as they go about getting things done. We have a lot of that kind of people working in the Southeast Region. Cases in point, we managed to take two of the four National Wildlife Refuge Association Awards this year, with Federal Wildlife Officer Kenny McCain (Lower Suwannee and Cedar

Keys NWR) named the National Employee of the Year; and Bob and Sharon Waldrop (Southeast Louisiana NWR Complex) taking home the National Volunteers of the Year award. In addition, Assistant Fire Management Office Sami Gray (Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR) walked away with the 2013 Risk Management Leadership Award for her outstanding work as FWS Incident Commander during the Region 5 Hurricane Sandy Response.

These four individuals are not alone in getting great results in their work endeavors in collaboration with others. If you take even a quick read of the staff notes that Deputy RD Mike Oetker sends out, you will be blown away by the scope and depth of what we are doing for fish, wildlife, and plants with people. Winter may not be done with us yet, literally or figuratively. There are lots of challenges out there and lots of opportunities to build better, stronger coalitions to address them. We are standing tall and making progress. Spring is on its way, and with it comes new life that we can help to foster and sustain—both within the communities we serve and with the wildlife and habitats we conserve. ❖

*- Cindy*

*ABC's of MDL continued...*



*A Yadkin River goldenrod, Misty Buchanan, North Carolina Natural Heritage Program*

## **What has been accomplished since 2011**

The Magazine Mountain shagreen, a snail only found on Magazine Mountain in Arkansas, was delisted in April of last year. The Tennessee purple coneflower was delisted in August 2011. During 2012 and 2013, the Southeast Region listed 17 species from the candidate list including 12 mussel species (11 endangered, one threatened), and three Florida plants, the Cape Sable thoroughwort, the Aboriginal prickly-apple, and the Florida semaphore cactus. All three plants were listed as endangered. Additionally, the Miami blue butterfly and the Florida bonneted bat were listed as endangered. In 2011, the Southeast Region downlisted two species from endangered to threatened status, the Okaloosa darter in Florida, and the Tulotoma snail in Alabama.

## **Candidate Conservation Agreements keep candidates off the federal list**

The Yadkin River goldenrod is the first MDL species to be removed from the candidate list due to a Candidate Conservation Agreement. In November of last year, the Service signed an agreement with Alcoa Power Generating Inc. (APGI) to protect the goldenrod. The rare wildflower is only found on Alcoa's land in North Carolina, along the shoreline on the Stanly-Montgomery county line.

APGI agreed to control invasive exotic plants, such as mimosa, privet, bush honeysuckle, and Japanese honeysuckle, which threaten to out-compete the Yadkin River goldenrod. Signs are posted along the shoreline warning boaters not to leave their boats and risk trampling on the goldenrod. APGI also agreed to support efforts to monitor the goldenrod population annually to ensure its well-being. The Service agreed to work with the North Carolina Plant Conservation Program to explore opportunities to harvest and spread seeds to boost the goldenrod population. ❖



## Dear Elsie

*What is the latest news on the Regional Office move? /s/Midtowner.*

**Response from Jackie Parrish, Business and Administration:**

In early January we shared with employees that we anticipated having news to share about our future office space within a short period of time. That information is not yet available from the General Services Administration -our Realtor in this effort. Unfortunately, we don't yet have that information and the rules of the process are such that we just don't have anything from GSA to share. We believe we are close to a decision from GSA that we can then begin to plan from. At the same time we are not going to predict exactly when that news will come our way. ❖

## Employee Spotlight

**Tim Keogh, Southeast Regional Webmaster**

*By Elsie Davis, External Affairs*



*Tim's painting of Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier in their 1971 heavyweight fight, Sean Keogh*

Tim Keogh has worked in the creative field most of his life. For the Service, his art is our websites which he builds and designs. As webmaster, he also produces digital graphics, uploads our news releases and videos, optimizes photos, and troubleshoots any code-related problems on the websites.

In his spare time, he paints portraits, still-lives, landscapes, and wildlife. He employs a detailed, traditional style using acrylic paint on canvas.

Tim joined the Service last year on April 22.

He was born in Wichita, Kansas, and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana. He holds a bachelor's degree in Communication Arts from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and certification in Web Design and New Media from the Kennesaw School of Continuing Education in Georgia.

In August 2005, Tim's home was flooded by Hurricane Katrina. He lived in a FEMA trailer while he rebuilt his house. Later, in the summer of 2009, when he was laid off from his job, Tim decided it was time for a vacation. He visited his brother in Marietta, Georgia, for a couple of weeks.

"Two weeks turned him into a full-time Marietta resident who never wants to leave the Atlanta area. He also relates to the Service's mission.

"I love our planet and its natural resources," says Tim. "I am here to use my creative skills in any way I can to support our mission" ❖

## What's Trending

*By Katherine Taylor, External Affairs*



**Apps:** Do you fall asleep to the ambient sounds of nature? Sleep Pillow is a free app that lets you choose from a variety of nature sounds (ocean, rain, birds chirping). A neat feature of this app is that it allows you to set a timer if you want the sounds to stop once you're asleep. You can even create your own sound mixes!



*Baby bobcat, Allie Stewart, USFWS*

**#MostSharedStory:**

Adorable bobcat kitten spotted at Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge. This post reached almost 12,000 followers!

**Culture:** USFWS makes BuzzFeed! Our very own Kevin Godsea, manager of Florida Panther NWR was quoted in a BuzzFeed story about USFWS and FWC working together to rescue a panther kitten. ❖

## Bragging Rights

**Miami Law Enforcement employees recognized**

*By Serena Epstein, Miami Law Enforcement Office*



*Bendele Award – Matthew Bendele's Prestigious Honor; David Pharo, USFWS*

Two employees at the Miami, Florida, Law Enforcement office were recently recognized for their outstanding professional accomplishments.

Supervisory Wildlife Inspector Vicky Vina received the seldom-seen Forty Years of Service pin and plaque. Among those on hand to celebrate the occasion was Special Agent in Charge Luis Santiago, who was once mentored by Vicky as a fellow wildlife inspector.

"Vicky leads by example, consistently demonstrating an unselfish, caring, and fair approach to running a high volume and complex wildlife inspection program," Miami Resident Agent in Charge David Pharo said.

Special Agent E. Matthew Bendele nabbed the prestigious honor of being named as the Service's nomination for the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) Officer of the Year, resulting in his receipt of the SEAFWA Outstanding Officer award for the Service.

"The honor was well-deserved. Matthew is sought after by peers and managers for his unmatched analytical abilities and perspective on legal issues," Miami Resident Agent in Charge David Pharo said. "His integrity and ability to convey complex issues to prosecutors and managers are invaluable."

The two award recipients were presented their awards in Miami, among colleagues and friends. ❖

## Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge wintering waterfowl numbers increasing

*By Bonnie Strawser, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge Complex*



*Mixed Flock, Since 2006, record numbers of wintering waterfowl have been documented on Mattamuskeet NWR, Allison Stewart, USFWS*

Recent survey results recorded more than 200,000 ducks, geese and swans on Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge. This represents a trend of increasing wintering waterfowl numbers on the refuge over the past few years. Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge conducts aerial and ground counts annually to record wintering waterfowl populations. With several thousand acres of managed wetlands and North Carolina's largest natural lake, Lake Mattamuskeet, the refuge provides a diversity of habitat and sanctuary for thousands of wintering waterfowl. We are approximately halfway through the wintering waterfowl period that spans from October through early March, and this year's aerial survey results indicate the wintering waterfowl population is up from last year.

The most abundant species surveyed on the refuge were green-winged teals, northern pintails, American wigeons, gadwalls and ring-necked ducks. Mattamuskeet Refuge and its associated habitats are of particular importance to green-winged teal, northern pintail and tundra swans. Long-term survey data for these species indicate that 20 to 30 percent of all green-winged teals, 40 to 80 percent of all northern pintails and 25 to 35 percent of all tundra swans in the Atlantic Flyway in any given year utilize Mattamuskeet Refuge as their core wintering grounds. ❖

## NRDAR Fairhope Office protects sea turtles with wildlife friendly lighting project

*By Nanciann Regalado, Deepwater Horizon NRDAR*

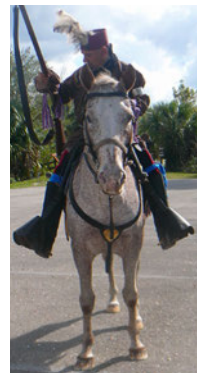
With the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) Early Restoration process well under way, many projects approved by the Trustees are the typical kinds of habitat restoration projects biologists have planned and implemented for years. The Service's Deepwater Horizon NRDAR Field Office, however, is leading an effort at Pensacola Beach, Florida, that is unprecedented in the Gulf of Mexico. The Service is partnering with Gulf Power, the Santa Rosa Island Authority, and Escambia County to replace white lights with amber light emitting diodes (LED's) at a popular public beach on Santa Rosa Island for the benefit of nesting sea turtles.

Sea turtles typically hatch at night and are drawn to the celestial light reflecting off the ocean. Along developed shorelines, the bright white lights of coastal development cause disorientation of hatchlings. Amber colored LEDs greatly reduce disorientation of sea turtles, cost a fraction of traditional lighting to operate and maintain, and are expected to last 15 years. While LEDs have been available at home improvement stores for a while, it wasn't until very recently that a manufacturer was able to produce a commercially applicable amber LED and fixture that also is certified as wildlife friendly.

About 40 poles and 100 lights will replace the existing lighting regime at the beach's parking lot. Additional lights will be added along pathways that connect business to the parking area. Total cost of the project is expected to be \$475,000. The project will serve as a model for the application of this new amber LED technology for wildlife lighting. ❖

## Everglades Then and Now

*By Serena Rinker, A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge*



*Seminole Tribe of Florida representative, Helen Fleishman*

The fifteenth annual Everglades Day Festival, Everglades Then and Now, had a foggy start but bloomed into a glorious, sunny day. Tying the historic Everglades with the current Everglades was the concept behind inviting various speakers who emphasized history and current restoration efforts in the ecosystem.

The 2,850 visitors that attended this event were treated to several firsts in the history of the festival. We were pleased to have a representative of the Seminole Tribe speak and give an excellent presentation on the Tools and Weapons of the Seminole Wars. He even rode in on his horse in full regalia!

The children enjoyed the archery station, and everyone enjoyed the variety that the food trucks offered. This year the event's planning committee made a conscientious effort to assist the mobility impaired festival visitors. The festival offered a

separate van specifically for wheelchair access and utilized its eight seat golf cart to take mobility impaired visitors on walking paths otherwise unavailable to them.

Visitors were treated to live animal presentations every hour by the Palm Beach Zoo, Busch Wildlife Sanctuary, and Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital among others. Folk music was presented by the Roadside Revue throughout the day. Guided walks included bird, marsh, nature, and swamp. Loxahatchee Canoeing, Inc. provided canoeing for adults and children. Another challenge offered children of all ages to see if they could beat their animal counterparts at Animal Olympics.

Throughout the day the Plein Air Artists of Palm Beach County did rendering capturing the lush beauty of our Refuge in oil and watercolor. These paintings will be judged and on display in the Visitor Center Theater for a month. There were also over thirty exhibitors on hand to introduce festival visitors to a variety of county organizations. ❖



*Learning a new skill at the Archery Station, Helen Fleishman*



## World Birding Rally in Southeastern Peru

By Al Begazo, South Florida Ecological Services Office



*BEGAZO IN PERU: from left, Al Begazo, Adam Kent, Tim Towles and their tour guide look for birds in the beautiful Andean Mountains of Peru, World Birding Rally.*

In December I went with a dream team of birders on a birding trip to the Lowland Rainforest and Andean mountains of Peru. Joining me were Tim Towles and Adam Kent of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

We were invited to participate in the World Birding Rally in Southeastern Peru, where I'm originally from. Birding Rallies are non-stop and intense competitions. All three of us have varying experience birding in the tropics.

Having visited and birded these places before, I added additional experience to our team. Competing against well-known and experienced birders from all over the world was extremely exciting and challenging. Our team led the charge for most of the competition, but finished as runner-ups by only two species behind the winners.

All three of us work with the threatened Florida scrub-jays in various capacities and wanted to see their tropical

counterparts. The bird book for Peru showed white-collared, purplish and violaceous jays as possible on our route. We observed the crow-sized violaceous and purplish and didn't see the white-collared. These jays move in flocks of three to six individuals and act much like our Florida scrub-jays.

With 455 species of birds seen and heard—including our target jays, our trip was a big success. We saw magnificent landscapes. We birded on the magnificent heights of Machu Picchu. Tim and Adam had cultural experiences they'll never forget, and we returned to Florida wanting to do it again. ❖

## Marsh created from Christmas trees?

By David Stoughton, Bayou Sauvage



*New Orleans media outlets watch Christmas tree drop, David Stoughton, USFWS*

More than 8,000 Christmas trees collected in New Orleans after the holidays were airlifted into the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge in late February as part of the fifteenth annual Christmas Tree Drop. The trees will establish a breakwater in open ponds on the refuge.

Like a rock jetty but made out of trees, the 600-foot line will trap sediment that will hold native marsh grasses and help create new productive marsh habitat.

The project is a joint effort with the Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs, New Orleans Department of Sanitation, and the Louisiana Army National Guard. The trees were dropped in coastal zones selected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To date, the annual project has re-established about 175 acres of marsh in Bayou Sauvage.

Most of the freshwater marsh units in the refuge are contained within hurricane and flood-protection levees. Historically, the wetland system benefitted from natural sediment deposits, but it is now walled in. Through this innovative project new land can be created in these areas. One of the largest urban refuges in the country, Bayou Sauvage is one of the last stops for migrating birds before they reach open water. ❖



*Constructing new marsh, Doris Waggoner, USFWS*

## Leadership Quote

*"Each person must live their life as a model for others."*

*- Rosa Parks*



# Friends and Volunteers

## Full-Time Wheelchair User hunt at Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge

By Erin Bellavia, Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge



Michael Timpa and his buck. Michael Timpa of Lake Charles, LA, harvested a buck, Shelley Chamberlain, NWTF.

A Full-Time Wheelchair User hunt is held annually at Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge in partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) Wheelin' Sportsmen program and the Tensas River Refuge Association, the refuge's Friends Group. This year's hunt at Tensas River was especially successful because of a large donation from NWTF. The Louisiana Chapter of the NWTF purchased 20 permanent blinds for use during the Full-Time Wheelchair User hunts and Youth Lottery hunts held every year.

Both hunts are held in the area surrounding the Visitor Center that is closed to public hunting. Individuals selected for these hunts have an incredible opportunity to hunt while playing an essential part in managing deer populations. The new blinds are large

enough for a motorized wheelchair and at least one other person while providing excellent protection from the elements, which can be a challenge for wheelchair-users.

While the refuge sends a sincere thank you to Louisiana NWTF for the donating the blinds, we also thank all of the volunteers who make the hunt possible. In addition to providing breakfast and lunch, volunteers shuttle hunters to and from blinds, serve as guides, and assist with cleaning and processing harvested deer. Thanks to everyone, and we look forward to next year!

NWTF's Wheelin' Sportsmen helps people with disabilities enjoy the outdoors and gain a sense of independence. In addition to local chapter events, Wheelin' Sportsmen hosts an assortment of other national events. ❖



Wheelin Sportsmen Group. Wheelin' Sportsmen participants gather for a group picture at the Tensas River Visitor Center, USFWS

## Showing off exotic, flowering plants

By David Stoughton, Bayou Sauvage

Not many wildlife refuges boast of an exotic flowering plant collection. They might even try to get rid of them! At Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges, they provide a big hook to attract hundreds of visitors to the refuge. Among the many interesting features of the historic property serving as the headquarters for Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex is a botanical garden with a large and varied assortment of camellias, azaleas, sasanquas, and other flowering ornamental bushes. Early owners of the property began planting and hybridizing camellia varieties in the 1930's. Many of these are in place still on the grounds, and some are as much as 70 to 80 years old.

Each year in February the Camellia Garden Open House showcases and celebrates the camellia collection found here. These beautiful flowering trees, originally from the Far East, were introduced into the U.S. in the 19th century. They became very popular in the South due to their colorful flowers and also because they bloom in the dead of winter, when most other color is gone from the landscape. Flower lovers generally are interested in environmental issues, and when they visit our gardens, they also learn about coastal erosion, wildlife habitat, and national wildlife refuges.

In partnership with the North Shore Camellia Club, The American Camellia Society, and The Friends of the Refuges the event welcomed more than 500 visitors. Activities scheduled for the day include talks, tours, and demonstrations. The event was profiled by local media outlets and provided an ideal setting to introduce a new audience to refuge resources. ❖



Visitors enjoy hearing about Camellias, April Antonellis



## Follow the Leader

**Leopoldo Miranda, ARD,  
Ecological Services**



*Leopoldo Miranda, USFWS*

### **How long have you been with the Service, and how long have you been the ARD of the Southeast's Ecological Service's Division?**

I started working with the Service as a Coop Unit student at North Carolina State University in 1991. Later, in 1998, I became the first Partners for Fish and Wildlife program coordinator for the Caribbean stationed at the Ecological Services Office located in the Caribbean National Wildlife Refuge, Puerto Rico. After several years in that position, I moved to the Washington DC office where I held several positions in the Branch of Habitat Restoration of the Fisheries and Habitat Conservation Division. Then, I became Project leader for the Chesapeake Bay Field Office in Annapolis, MD. I have been the Ecological Services ARD for the Southeast Region since January 2012.

### **What do you think is the biggest accomplishment in Southeast's Ecological Services this past year? Please describe?**

The biggest accomplishment for the Southeastern Ecological Services program has been our enhanced coordination and collaboration with our state fish and wildlife agencies. This is not only to implement conservation actions on both private and public lands for the benefit of listed species, but it also is to implement proactive conservation actions to benefit hundreds of at risk species with the goal of precluding the need to list them under the ESA.

### **What was the biggest project or challenge In Ecological Services this past year? Has there been progress?**

Well, I think that here in the Southeast we have many great projects and initiatives as well as many complicated challenges. There is never a quiet time, and I love it! The biggest challenge currently is our declining budgets situation. This impacting our operations like it never has before. The down trend of our budgets will continue for the foreseeable future. However, I see it as an opportunity to refocus our operations and increase our partnership efforts to protect the fish and wildlife resources entrusted to the Service by the American public. As a result, in Ecological Services, we have developed a work plan identifying our priorities to support the Service mission and goals. Most importantly, this work plan provides guidance to project leaders and staff on how to make the hard decisions on what must be done and what may not be accomplished based on our priorities, current budget and workload.

### **What is most important to you as a leader?**

The most important thing a leader may do is listening to the people we work with and the public we serve. This way we are able to lead the right people to be in the right places, performing the right jobs, becoming leaders themselves. I want to lead my staff to become leaders.

### **What advice would you give someone who is seeking to become a leader?**

First of all, believe in you, take risks and build trust. Taking risks and having diverse experiences are critical and can only be done if you believe in yourself. However, taking risks and having a lot of experiences are not the only thing a leader should be doing. It takes active training too. That could be accomplished through formal training, seminars etc. as well as by reading about leadership, applying it to your day to day activities and talking to other proven leaders. A combination of active learning and diverse experiences combined with helping others become leaders, is a recipe for success.

### **What qualities do the best leaders possess?**

They help others become leaders. ❖

## Get to Know an Office

### **Biologists in the Ecological Services Listing Branch**

**Stefanie Blihovde:** I have been with the Service for almost 20 years. During that time I have worked in the Ecological Services program in three field offices (Jacksonville, FL; Carlsbad, CA; and Phoenix, AZ), the Southeast Regional Office, and the National Conservation Training Center. I be returning to the Southeast Regional Office in late March, where I will join the Listing Team and assist in the Multi-District Litigation settlement workload. When I am not working, I enjoy outdoor activities with my husband, such as kayaking, hiking, biking, and horse-back riding.

**Victoria Davis:** As a Fish and Wildlife Biologist, I work for Ecological Services Branch of Candidate Conservation and Classification. I am one of four biologists in the Southeast region who serves as a project manager for listing and critical habitat rules and annual candidate review notices. In addition to these duties, I serve as the Regional Girl Scout Coordinator and a mentor in the regional mentoring program. It is a pleasure collaborating with cohorts throughout the Service, States, Non-government organizations, and the public. Some official duties outside of the office include chauffeuring my teen to his engagements, parent volunteer with the First Tee of Atlanta, and volunteering with Giving Back to Humanity. In my spare time, I find peace hiking the trails at many of the local and State Parks.

**Nikki Lamp:** I wear two hats in the Service: one as a regional listing biologist and another as the Ecological Services Pathways (formerly STEP/SCEP) Program Coordinator. As a listing biologist, I serve as a project coordinator and liaison between our field biologists, and the Regional Office Ecological Services and External Affairs staff and managers, regional solicitors, and Headquarters listing staff. I really enjoy collaborating with our field biologists and helping them work through tough policy questions as they craft listing and critical habitat rules. As the Ecological Services Pathways Program Coordinator, I help translate Pathways policy to the field and students and connect students

*Continued on Page 8...*

with field offices. One of the best parts of my job is working directly with talented, passionate students. As often as possible, I guest lecture at universities and join the Athens Ecological Services office in conducting outreach programs in local schools. Mentoring and inspiring the next generation of conservation professionals is so important to the future of the Service. In my non-work life, I love to travel with my husband and throw parties for friends and family.

**Erin Rivenbark:** I am a field-trained herpetologist, who has worked in the Listing Program for over 10 years. I have worked on listing, recovery and candidate conservation actions on a variety of species throughout the Region and beyond. I also am a trained Structured Decision Making consultant and facilitator. In this capacity, I have worked with many teams on species conservation decisions throughout the United States (landscape-level planning in the Northeast and Southeast and recovery planning efforts in the Southeast, Hawaii, California, the Pacific Northwest, the Southwest, and the Northeast). I am currently helping to facilitate implementation of the new

Species Status Assessment approach in the Region. In my spare time, I like hanging out with my family, a wonderful husband, a beautiful two-year old girl, and two great dogs. I've also recently started oil painting.

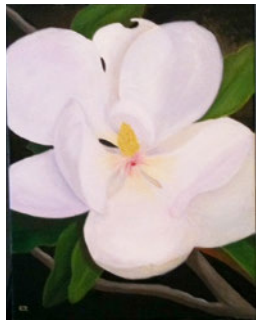


photo: Oil painting of a Magnolia by Erin Rivenbark

**Rob Tawes:** I have worked with the Service for over 13 years, working first in the Cookeville, TN, and Daphne, AL, field offices before transferring to the Regional Office in 2010. Prior to the Service, I worked for the Georgia Department of Transportation and was a Peace Corps volunteer in Costa Rica. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my wife, 13-year-old daughter, and 10-year-old son, mountain biking, hiking, and coaching youth baseball and soccer. ❖

## Coming and Going

### Lorna Patrick retires

By Rob Tawes, Ecological Services

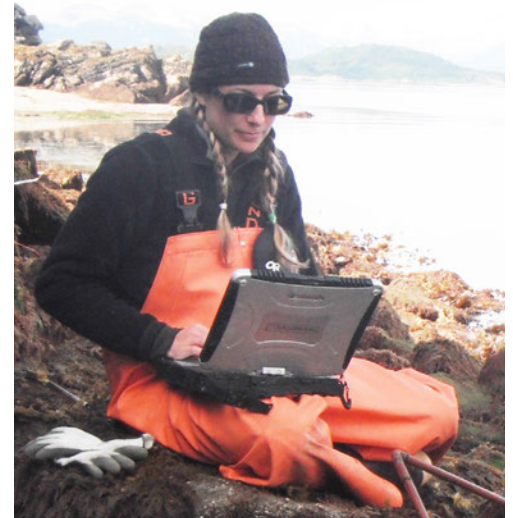


Photo courtesy of Lorna Patrick

Lorna Patrick retired March 3, after working for the Service for 36 years, starting out as a coop student in Vero Beach. She worked brief stints in the fisheries program and at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, and then spent the majority of her career at the Panama City Ecological Services Field Office. While in Panama City she became a champion for coastal conservation. She led recovery efforts for many coastal species and became a recognized expert in sea turtles and artificial lighting. She played major roles in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill response and in various cold-stunning events affecting sea turtles. For the last three and a half years, she served as a regional listing biologist, and was our "go-to" person for numerous challenging actions, including the loggerhead sea turtle critical habitat revision and the listing and critical habitat designations for the Neosho mucket and rabbitsfoot mussels. She plans to spend her retirement on the couch "for a while anyway," Lorna adds. ❖

## Welcome Angela Romito to Ecological Services

By Roxanna Hinzman Ecological Services, Atlanta, Georgia



Angela Romito, NPS

Angela Romito has joined Ecological Services – Division of Environmental Review as the Southeast Regional Section 10a1A Recovery Permit Coordinator. She comes to us from the University of Georgia's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. There, her doctoral work involved the management and interagency coordination of programs involving sea otters and brown bears in Alaska. She sits next to Jack Arnold on the second floor in the Regional Office. Please stop by and introduce yourself!

## Service employees called to active duty in U.S. Navy

By Serena Epstein, Miami Law Enforcement Office

Two Office of Law Enforcement employees in Miami, Florida, are putting a spin on Fish and Wildlife Service. Glenn Yeck and Marc Lector, both U.S. Navy Reserves, have temporarily traded their Fish and Wildlife Service duties for active duty in the military.

Special Agent Glenn Yeck, whose hard work and dedication was pivotal in securing recent convictions associated with Operation Rock Bottom, was recalled to active duty as an Intelligence Officer

*Continued on Page 9...*



in March 2013. Over the past year, he has served with the U.S. Special Operations Command in Afghanistan, working with the Afghan National Directorate for Security to enable them to conduct autonomous intelligence support to combat operations. Glenn looks forward to returning to work in Miami this summer.

Evidence Custodian Marc Lector was recently recalled to active duty for up to 12 months of service as a Logistics Specialist second class Petty Officer. He begins his deployment in March, serving with the U.S. Special Operations Command in the country of Bahrain. There, he will conduct multi-branch support operations. Marc, whose work with evidence is essential to the smooth operation of the law enforcement office in Miami, is expected to return to work in 2015.

Both employees are greatly missed by all at the Miami office. Thanks to Glenn and Marc for your service at home and abroad! ❖

### Welcome home Elvin Monge

*By Serena Epstein, Miami Law Enforcement Office*

Special Agent Elvin Monge recently returned to the Southeast Region. Monge, a native of Puerto Rico, began his Service career there as a wildlife inspector in 2004. He later transferred to the Miami port. In 2010, Monge was selected as a Special Agent, and he served in this role in Honolulu, Hawaii, until 2013 when an opportunity arose to come home. Monge is temporarily serving in the Miami office until he is permanently reassigned to San Juan, Puerto Rico.

“Monge is a great asset to our team. He brings with him a strong background of import and export experience that will serve him well for the type of international work that occurs at this duty station in Puerto Rico.” Resident Agent in Charge David Pharo said. “He also is a native of Puerto Rico and can communicate in Spanish which is essential.”

Not everyone is celebrating Monge’s homecoming—his presence was quickly felt by would-be wildlife smugglers. During his first week in Miami, he apprehended a formerly licensed importer/exporter who was indicted for wildlife smuggling on his way to permanently leave the United States. In addition, Monge spearheaded an investigation of a prominent Miami resident who illegally possessed live MBTA & CITES protected birds. ❖

## What do you think?

Which 2014 Oscar-nominated movies have you seen? Which movie was your favorite and why? Go to [https://docs.google.com/a/fws.gov/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Ao7JX4r1gw3fdEpwd2VsUdOVINNRHd2WmpEajNJZHc&usp=drive\\_web#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/a/fws.gov/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Ao7JX4r1gw3fdEpwd2VsUdOVINNRHd2WmpEajNJZHc&usp=drive_web#gid=0) to respond.

12 Years a Slave  
Philomena  
American Hustle

Captain Phillips  
The Wolf of Wall Street  
Dallas Buyers Club

Gravity  
Nebraska  
Her

## Photo Caption Contest

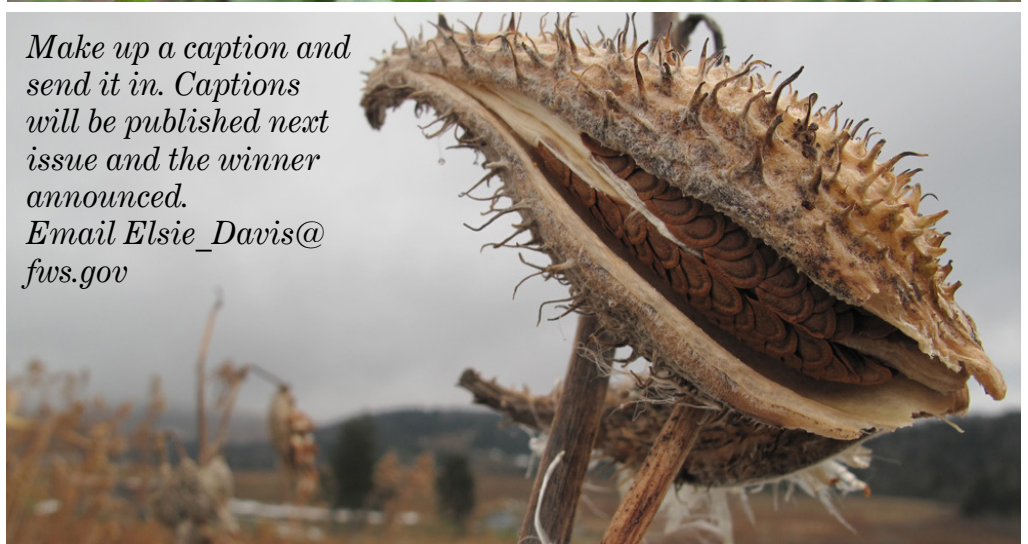
*From the January-February 2014 issue - Answer to creative photo caption...*

*Green Lynx Spider (Peucetia viridans). Photo by Larry Woodward, Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge.*



*Make up a caption and send it in. Captions will be published next issue and the winner announced.*

*Email Elsie\_Davis@fws.gov*



USFWS



## Holiday Graphic



Artwork by Tim Keogh

## Something You Didn't Know About Me

David Viker, Southeast Regional chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System, is just second generation American-born, with grandparents from Scandinavia and Great Britain. He's a third generation American public servant, though, with extended family serving in Army in WWII, the Navy during the Cuban missile crisis, the Marines through the end of the Cold War, and the Army during the Gulf War. David served as a refuge officer while also in refuge management in Louisiana, North Carolina, Mississippi, and Florida in the 1990s and early 2000s.



## Answers to January-February poll question:

What stories would you like to see in future issues of E-Grits:

### Responses:

Mitigation hatchery closings;

Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC):  
Surrogate species as part of SHC;

Discuss the SHC example of the management of Florida scrub jays at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge;

Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategies and how they affect work in a field Office;

Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategies: Ongoing work with the team and the states' involvement;

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives:  
How is the expenditure of the Service's funds benefitting species. Give a concrete example from each Southeast LCC;

Ginseng: Surrogate species in plants like goldenrod to ginseng;

Red wolf recovery actions;

Geospatial data products that were prepared for the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP);

Explain At-risk species and conservation agreements;

Discuss examples of conservation agreements, such as the revised Louisiana pine snake agreement or the agreement covering multiple aquatic species;

Explain the Multi-District Litigation (MDL); and,

Do a story about threatened and endangered species. ❖